

REMARKS

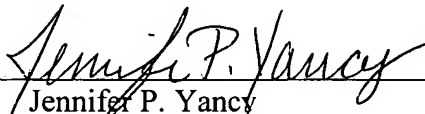
According to the Examiners suggestion, claims 33-39 have been renumbered 8-14, respectively. Since the original PCT application contained claims 1-32, Applicant is concerned that the application will contain multiple claims 8-14. However, Applicant is willing to conform to the Examiners claim numbering with the understanding that the claims listed in this Amendment will be deemed the proper claims 8-14.

Referencing the art rejections set forth in the Office Action, claims 8-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Downey et al. (U.S. 5,762,891) in view of Krause et al. (U.S. 5,820,966). The present application is directed to a method of precipitating arsenic from a solution containing copper, ferric iron and ferrous iron whilst minimising copper losses. The method includes a series of continuously stirred tank reactors, wherein a portion of the precipitated ferric arsenate compounds exiting a final tank in the series is recycled to a first tank in the series. This recycled ferric arsenate provides seeds for enhanced crystalline formation. The pH of the solution in each tank reactor is adjusted and air is added to the solution to oxidise a portion of the ferrous iron to ferric iron. The solution is heated to an elevated temperature to increase the rate of ferric arsenate precipitation and to minimise copper co-precipitation. The pH of the solution in a second tank in the series is maintained at a pH of about 1.5 and ferric arsenate compounds from the seeded aqueous solution are selectively precipitated with a first calcium-containing neutralising agent. Applicant has added the language from dependent claim 38 (amended claim 13) to include the limitation that a second calcium-

containing neutralising agent is added during the method of selectively precipitating arsenic. This second-calcium containing neutralising agent is added to a third tank in the series that maintains the solution at a pH of about 1.9. The Examiner has indicated that both the Downey reference and the Krause reference disclose details for removing ferric arsenate compounds from a solution containing Cu and suggest recovery of the Cu. However, neither of these references teach nor suggest the use of two steps for adding calcium-containing neutralising agents in two tanks at low pH values. The Krause reference clearly shows a single step for adding the calcium-containing base 44 into a neutralization tank 42, whereby the calcium-containing neutralizing agent neutralizes the oxidized stream to a final pH of at least about 7 (see column 2, lines 45-48 and column 3, lines 43-45). Additionally, the Examiner has indicated that the Downey reference does not specifically disclose the use of a series of continuously stirred tanks. While the pH range during the addition of the calcium-material ranges from 1.5 to about 2.5 (see column 8, lines 1-2), this reference does not teach nor suggest two separate additions of a calcium-containing agent at two fixed pH amounts. It is fundamental importance that the present invention limits copper losses by operating at a low pH. In Krause and Downey, there are substantial copper losses by precipitation due to the relatively higher operating pH values. Thus, in the present invention, there is no need to re-recover the copper as is the case with the Krause and Downey processes. Therefor, the Applicant submits that the rejection has been overcome and requests reconsideration .

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the art rejections are overcome and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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